



U.S. Immigration
and Customs
Enforcement

December 23, 2005

News Release

ICE DEPORTS 240 GUATEMALANS UNDER EXPEDITED REMOVAL

The ICE San Antonio office deported more than 17,000 aliens in fiscal year 2005

SAN ANTONIO, Texas — U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) today deported 240 Guatemalan nationals under a new program called the Secure Border Initiative (SBI). The aliens were removed on two separate government flights, one leaving from San Antonio and one from Harlingen, Texas.

The Secure Border Initiative is a two-month-old program recently announced by Homeland Security Secretary Michael Chertoff. One aspect of SBI allows ICE to quickly remove “other than Mexican” (OTM) non-criminal illegal aliens to their home countries under an expedited removal process. The 240 Guatemalans were deported today under this process.

Expedited removal is an administrative process aimed at reducing the number of OTMs who have spent less than 14 days in the United States, and who are apprehended within 100 miles of the border. OTMs apprehended under the expedited removal program are detained and quickly returned to their countries of origin after they receive travel documents. They are not required to appear before a federal immigration judge. Expedited removal reduces the time illegal aliens remain in detention awaiting their deportation from about 30 days to an average of 15 days.

The Guatemalans were transported via a government aircraft system operated by the U.S. Marshals Service called the Justice Prisoner and Alien Transportation System (JPATS). The flights departed this morning from the San Antonio International Airport and the Harlingen International Airport. Each flight carried 120 aliens. ICE worked closely with Guatemalan government officials to make the flight arrangements, and obtain travel documents and country clearance.

“Support from the Guatemalan government has been outstanding,” said Marc J. Moore, ICE field office director in San Antonio. “This cooperative effort allowed us to effect the removals as efficiently and safely as possible. ICE will continue to work with the Guatemalan government for future removals via JPATS.” Moore oversees ICE Detention and Removal Operations in the south Texas area, which includes the cities of: San Antonio, Austin, Harlingen and Laredo.

Today's deportations demonstrate ICE's commitment to restoring integrity to the nation's immigration system. The ICE San Antonio field office removed more than 17,000 criminal and non-criminal aliens during fiscal year 2005, which ended Sept. 30. Of those deported, 13,000 were from countries other than Mexico.

ICE deports aliens from Mexico via bus, and aliens from most other countries are removed using both commercial and government aircraft. JPATS is one of the largest transporters of prisoners in the world, and handles hundreds of requests every day to move prisoners and criminal aliens nationally and internationally.

The Office of Detention and Removal Operations (DRO) focuses on promoting public safety and national security by ensuring that all aliens who are subject to deportation are removed from the United States as expeditiously as possible.

ICE

U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement was established in March 2003 as the largest investigative arm of the Department of Homeland Security. ICE is comprised of four integrated divisions that form a 21st century law enforcement agency with broad responsibilities for a number of key homeland security priorities.